

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Park and Recreation Department
Conference Room, 11th Floor, City Hall
Monday, July 11, 2005
3:30 p.m.**

Present: Cherylane Adams, Dennis Brunner, John Kemp, Doug Leeper, Glen Dey, Janet Miller, and Mike Tranbarger

Also Present: Mike North - Law Department; and Doug Kupper and Maryann Crockett (staff)

First Vice President Miller called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m.

First Vice President Miller introduced new Park Board members Cherylane Adams, John Kemp, Mick Tranbarger, and Doug Leeper, who each gave a brief background of their experience and education. Current Board members Dennis Brunner, Glen Dey, and Jane Miller in turn spoke briefly about their tenure as Park Board members. Staff Maryann Crockett, recording secretary, and legal counsel Mike North were also introduced.

Director Kupper commented that staff normally scheduled an orientation session for new Board members to familiarize them with the Park and Recreation operating budget, Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget, and the duties and responsibilities of the five divisions within the department. He stated that usually a morning meeting was held, followed by lunch (preferably in a park, weather permitting) and then an afternoon tour of park areas. He said because the orientation took the better part of one whole day, it was usually scheduled on a Saturday. He added that the orientation was considered a public meeting and that it would take the place of the regularly scheduled meeting for that month.

It was the general consensus of the Board that Saturday, September 24 would be an appropriate date for the orientation/retreat, and that the 24th would take the place of the regularly scheduled September 12 Park Board Meeting. Several locations were discussed, and staff indicated that they would notify Board members as soon as a location was determined. *(This date was subsequently changed to Saturday, September 10, at the Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 E. 29th Street, North.)*

First Vice President Miller asked Board members to notify staff of any particular topics of discussion for the agenda or the names of parks they would like included in the tour.

PUBLIC AGENDA

First Vice President Miller explained that the Board offered the public the opportunity to speak to them about items that were not on the regular agenda. She asked if anyone from the audience had items for the public agenda. The following individuals spoke:

- John Stevens, East Schweiter Neighborhood Association – commented that he attended the dedication of the new water feature at Fairmount Park. He said he was very impressed, and that the fountain was a neat addition to the park system. Director Kupper mentioned that the

dedication ceremony for the fountain at Osage Park was Saturday, July 23, 2005, at 10:00 a.m.

- Bob Aldrich, Orchard Park Neighborhood Association – thanked board members and staff for their attendance at the Orchard Park Neighborhood Association “Party in the Park” on June 25. He commented that the event was a fabulous success and thanked park staff for their efforts in support of the event.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **On motion by Brunner, second by Dey, the minutes of the June 13, 2005, meeting were reviewed and approved.**
2. **Discussion of Ice Sports.** Director Kupper explained that in September 2004, the City Manager appointed the Department of Park and Recreation to oversee the contract between the City of Wichita and Canlan Ice Sports Inc. for management of the Ice Sports Center.

Director Kupper stated that after staff researched and developed a spreadsheet on the operation, it became clear that projected revenues would not meet expenses; and, therefore, staff subsequently requested a subsidy in the amount of \$50,000 from the City Council. He explained that there were several reasons for the revenue shortfall including space rental contracts, the seasonal nature of ice skating – during June, July and August most youth were involved in other outdoor sports such as softball and swimming, and lack of revenues from public skating sessions. He also mentioned that it cost approximately \$22,000 a month to keep one ice rink operational. He reported that on May 17 the City Council approved the subsidy and requested that the contract with Canlan Ice Sports Inc. be terminated.

Director Kupper reported that the requested subsidy was almost spent and that at tomorrow’s City Council Meeting staff would request an additional \$25,000. He added that the figure skating season would be starting up in September. He said in addition, staff was programming the building for other uses when the second rink is shut down such as in-line skating/rollerblading, in-line hockey, indoor soccer, and lacrosse. He added that it would be the Park Board’s function to hear concerns regarding policies and procedures associated with running the center as well as the fee structure.

Director Kupper concluded by stating that the City had released a request for proposal (RFP) to secure new management for the facility. He added that the Park and Recreation Department would be responding to that RFP. He commented that staff had several ideas for diversifying the facility and that staff needed to “crunch the numbers”. Adams asked if a feasibility study had been conducted prior to building the facility, and if so, she would like to see a copy of it. Director Kupper stated that staff would research and locate that document.

Dey asked about facility signage. Director Kupper responded that a sign had been ordered that would be visible from Kellogg. Adams asked what had been done to market the facility? Director Kupper reported that Canlan Ice Sports Inc. did have a marketing director; however, the position became vacant last fall and had not been filled. Adams suggested collaborating with USD 259 to use the center for physical education. She mentioned that Olympians started young. Director

Kupper commented that 3 and 4 years olds had participated in the Christmas Show he had seen at the center.

First Vice President Miller asked about competitive figure skaters using the facility for practice and events. Director Kupper said the center has hosted three regional figure skating competitions, a regional adult hockey tournament and other events as well as practice time for figure skaters. He added that there didn't appear to be enough revenue from general admissions to cover expenses, and said it was lack of facility usage by the local community that appeared to be the problem. Responding to a question from First Vice President Miller concerning the funding source for the additional subsidy, he commented that the funds would be provided from the general fund, not the Park and Recreation budget.

3. **Acceptance of land donation at K-96 and Ridge.** Director Kupper referred board members to the map and plat information on the North Ridge Village Addition furnished with the agenda. He explained that the parcel, known as "Reserve D", was located just south of K-96 and consisted of approximately 16.9 acres. He commented that the area could not be developed because the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) has designated the parcel as a habitat area for the Eastern Spotted Skunk, an endangered species in the State of Kansas. He said the developer proposed to deed the land to the City of Wichita as parkland, which would satisfy the DKWP requirement that the area be governed as a conservation area and designated in perpetuity for protection of the species. He commented that several other park areas have also been designated as habitat areas at Pawnee Prairie, Chisholm Creek and Grove Parks. He added that several other parcels surrounding this area might be donated to the City in the future. He said the land donation would be presented to the City Council tomorrow to be designated as a "Wichita Wild" area.

Director Kupper explained that an easement would be granted to allow access from 37th Street to the property for maintenance purposes and possible construction of a parking area. Dey asked about restrictions on development of the area. Director Kupper said no buildings would be allowed; however, trails may be a possibility in the future. Leeper commented that Pawnee Prairie had a large spotted skunk population and asked how many areas needed to be designated as habitat to protect the species. Director Kupper commented that the KDWP made that determination.

Brunner asked about the area east of Reserve D being developed into a medical building. Director Kupper commented that there were several commercial sites adjacent to the site.

First Vice President Miller briefly explained to the new board members that the Park and Recreation Department had little money for land acquisition, so donations were a good opportunity to obtain land for parks. In addition, she mentioned that it was difficult to go back and acquire land for parks once an area had been developed. She also noted that currently there was no regional plan to acquire parkland before an area becomes developed.

Tranbarger asked if the City had ever declined a land donation. Director Kupper said not since he had been there. He did mention that he had been contacted regarding a 2-acre parcel; however, there was no public access to the property. First Vice President Miller added that when additional park acreage is acquired, the park maintenance budget is not increased accordingly. There was brief discussion concerning Charter Ordinance #125 and permanently designating areas as parkland. Director Kupper explained that the deed to Reserve D would include the caveat that the land be preserved as a conservation area in perpetuity.

Bob Aldrich asked about the possibility of making zoning changes through the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) to protect parkland. Director Kupper commented that staff was looking into that option.

On motion by Kemp, second by Adams, IT WAS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to recommend that the City Council accept the land donation.

4. **Naming of park at 11th Street and Indiana – “Walters Memorial Park”.** Director Kupper referred board members to the information provided on this item with the agenda. He reported that a small pocket park had been purchased at the corner of 11th Street and Indiana as a result of a community development plan initiated by the Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD) in conjunction with members of the McAdams neighborhood. He said the City agreed that in exchange for the sale of the property, the area would be designated as the “Walters Memorial Park”. He stated that the Park Board is the official naming committee for parks.

There was discussion concerning the proposed memorial marker and monuments and memorials in other park areas.

It was the general consensus of the Board to defer this item until the August meeting pending further research by staff on the request.

5. **Reschedule August Meeting Date.** Director Kupper reported that he would be unable to attend the regular meeting on August 8 and asked if the Board wanted to change the meeting date or conduct the regularly scheduled meeting without him.

On motion by Adams, second by Kemp, IT WAS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to move the August meeting date to Monday, August 15.

6. **Director’s Update.** Director Kupper reported briefly on the following items.

- **Updated Board and staff member listings** – board members where provided two lists - one published on the WEB page for the general public, and one list for board members and staff.
- **Repurchase of Planeview Parcel** – explained that the deed for the 3-acre parcel at Planeview stipulated that if the property was not developed within twenty-four months of closing, the City would have the opportunity to buy the parcel back at the original purchase price. Kemp asked about the bicycle path. Director Kupper reported that it had been re-routed.

Kemp also inquired about the possibility of naming the park area that was acquired to replace the Planeview acreage after Phyllis Hall, former President of the Planeview Neighborhood Association and staunch park supporter. Director Kupper reported that the 16 acres had already been named “Stearman Park”. He said the Board could opt to rename another area and take the recommendation to the City Council. Friendship Park in the Hilltop neighborhood was mentioned as a possibility.

- **Proposed El Zocalo Project** – Dennis Brunner mentioned that he had heard that the El Zocalo proposal to construct a community center at Woodland Park was due to go to the City Council on July 19. Brunner mentioned that he had missed feelings about the proposal and added that maybe a community type building might increase park usage.

Adams asked about the design of the bicycle path at the park. Director Kupper explained that park staff was not involved in the design process. He said the MAPD, in conjunction with the North Riverside Neighborhood Association (the group who actually wrote the grant document for the path), and the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) designed and implemented the project.

- **Adopt-A-Park Application** – Cherylane Adams asked about the status of the El Pueblo Neighborhood Association's Adopt-A-Park application. Director Kupper responded that to his knowledge, staff has no record of receiving it. Adams provided Director Kupper a copy of the application.
- **Fencing at Evergreen Park** – Cherylane Adams asked about the fence at Evergreen Park. She said it destroyed the visual of the park. There was discussion concerning a possible zoning requirement to fence commercial property to separate it from park property. Director Kupper said he would check with the MAPD and report back to the Board.
- **Grove Park** – Glen Dey asked about the status of the new sewer line at Grove Park and how that would affect the bicycle path. Director Kupper said he would check on the status of the project and report back to the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Janet Miller, First Vice President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett
Recording Secretary